426 231 The lending of horses, especially in an emergency, was not uncommon especially among relatives. The owner however retained full rights and could dictate to the borrower the use to which the horse might be put. "One time, for instance," according to Singer whose husband Iron Bucket was an eye-witness, "there were four lodges or families of Gros Ventres who happened to be traveling along separated from the larger group. Bear Nose's mother was taking care of a young man who was exceedingly ill. She didn't own the horse which was drawing the travois upon which the young man was lying. As the party climbed a steep hill the lines tying the travois to the horse broke and the travois dropped to the ground. The woman who owned the horse was already at the top and called down: 'Just leave him. Just leave him. You are always hauling him around with my horse.' The others told this woman owner: 'Let us pack him once more and wherever we stop we will make a sweatbath house for him and leave him in there and leave food for him.' But the owner didn't want it that way. The others told her again: 'Just pack him once more. You should think of the time when he was a Scout [at Ft. Assiniboine] and he used to get a lot of grub for you [with his pay].' But she said: 'No. I won't be packing him any more.' He was pretty far gone—his body already covered with flies—but the one who had been caring for him finally was forced to abandon him there with his few belongings and without any shelter or anything else. When they left him he had a sheet over his head and he started to cry. But the owner of the horse was adamant. The others of the party could argue with her, but could take no further action. They moved quite a distance and that very night a terrible storm came up and probably finished the young man. The woman who had been caring for him died shortly thereafter, and the others thought this was a consequence of their having abandoned him so callously, but they all said: 'It should have been the owner of the horse who died instead of the one who cared for him."

231 721 Because the real competition among the northern plains tribes was for horses, it was not uncommon that a relatively well-to-do family might lose their entire pack of horses through a single raid by the enemy. The following experience of Coming Daylight illustrates the point.

to himself: 'He gave to me, so I'll give to him.' But no one was in duty bound to give the equivalent in return."

Within the network of kinship obligations, exchange was more often indirect than reciprocal. A man could expect help from his father and from his mother's brother without being under obligation to return goods in like amount—he was supposed to repay them by conducting himself in such a way that they could be proud of him. This meant that the man in his turn would be especially generous toward his sister and her children, that he would adequately fulfill his duties toward his wife's people and provide goods in sufficient amount that his wife could fulfill her own obligations especially those toward her own brother's wife and children.

When others saw fit to honor an individual, say for bravery in warfare, that person was supposed to give away goods in large amounts to show that he appreciated the honor; and his relatives would join with him in giving, thereby increasing his, as well as their own, prestige. Likewise in paying for services, such as those of a medicine man, relatives would "chip in" to the best of their ability, the one assuming the largest part of the burden receiving the greatest boost in public esteem. A person who impoverished himself by giving generously at such times would be sure that, with his reputation thus established, he would soon be the recipient of gifts dispensed by others in like liberality. Meantime, however, he could not afford to sit back awaiting the presents from others. He would soon lose his coveted reputation and be referred to as lazy, an epithet strong enough to bring tears to the eyes of a man who entertained any ambitions whatsoever.

If a person were in need, it was possible for him to request what was necessary, preferably from some relative who was well-to-do, and usually his request would be met. But a continual borrower lost status and a limit was thus put upon indiscriminate "begging." One woman stated: "If your sister asked you for something you would not refuse her, but it was to your brother's wife you would give things voluntarily. A woman had great pride in keeping her brother's wife well-dressed, and if you had an extra supply of dried berries she is the one you would think of first."

Thus we have the basis for the generalizations the Gros Ventres

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

man, but his maternal uncle would be given the greatest amount of credit for his nephew's prowess, and he would rejoice more than the others in his nephew's successes.

A nephew could, if he wished, use his uncle's property without asking permission. If he damaged the property so borrowed, however, the uncle might reprimand him severely. Sometimes an uncle took the initiative and told one of his nephews: "All that I have is yours." In such a case, not only would the nephew be free to use the property without asking, but even if it were damaged—say a borrowed horse was carelessly injured or lost,—nothing would be said by the uncle nor any punishment inflicted. A nephew was supposed to be very respectful toward his uncle, but was freer with him than he could be with his own father. He could, for instance, joke with his uncle about being a lady's man, but he could not go too far in referring to sexual matters. He would not feel quite so embarrassed if his uncle should happen to see him unclothed, as would be the case with his father or his brother-in-law, but he would be far from comfortable in that situation.

The relationship between a man and his sister's daughter was not as direct as that between him and his sister's son. If a woman died, leaving orphan girls, it was not unusual that the wife of her brother would say: "I am going to take these girls so that I can have a son-in-law through them." This is what happened to Coming Daylight and her sister, whose maternal uncle took responsibility for them, although they were actually trained by his mother. It was he who arranged their marriages and it was to him they returned when widowed or divorced. His sons took the place of brothers to these two orphans.

While he did not take on the role of disciplinarian to his sister's daughters, whether or not their parents were living, the maternal uncle was expected to be generous to his nieces and to show his regard by giving things away in their honor. If a maternal uncle asked a niece for anything she possessed, she was supposed to give it to him without question, even though at considerable cost to herself. "Coming Daylight was asked by her uncle for the elk teeth she owned, to exchange with a Crow who had offered him an excellent race horse in return. She gave up these valuables without a word, though she hated to part with them since she did not know

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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their fellows, there were many other ones that fulfilled the same function. Of these latter, some, more distinctively ritual, will be dealt with later passim under "Flat Pipe Ritual"; others, more secular, may be mentioned now. 793 784

The keeper and co-keeper were not supposed to carry a pack on their own backs, except that on the march the Pipe bundle might be packed by the co-keeper. [482]

They could not mount and dismount a horse on the same side, but mounted from the right side and dismounted from the left.

If you handed something to the keeper it became his property, and if he handed something to you it became yours. If you thoughtlessly left anything with the keeper or co-keeper to keep for you, —if, for instance, you said: "Here, hold my horse (or my gun)," —the object became the property of the keeper or co-keeper and could not be gotten back. The keeper and co-keeper never loaned their robes, dresses, moccasins or other belongings, unless asked, and they were not supposed to be asked to loan. If you thoughtlessly broke the code and asked to borrow something from them, they were obliged to give it to you to own. [426]

Neither the keeper nor co-keeper was allowed to handle ashes, nor could the Pipe bundle remain in the keeper's lodge when ashes were taken out. Were this rule violated, the keeper or co-keeper or both would lose eyesight. When ashes were to be removed from the keeper's lodge, the Pipe bundle was taken outside the lodge by the co-keeper, and both the keeper and the co-keeper stayed outside, while another of the keeper's wives removed the ashes.

When a group of men were seated in a crescent or near-circle enjoying a purely social smoke together, each took a puff from the lighted pipe and passed it clockwise to the man on his left until it reached the end of the line. Then the pipe would be passed back anti-clockwise from hand to hand to the other end without anyone puffing from it. But if the keeper were in the group, he could take a puff not only when the pipe was passing him clockwise but also on its anti-clockwise return. The man passing the pipe to the keeper from either left or right had to raise it upward a little toward his own right before doing so. The first time the pipe reached the keeper, he would take a big puff, and point 276 793

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

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a woman, one of her adult male kin might be chosen by her to have sexual intercourse with the woman transferee.

To judge from the many anecdotes in circulation about this sex element in transfer payment, anecdotes dating mostly from quite recent decades in the memory of informants, it was a very common topic of gossip and of grapevine communication.

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Transfer of power by gift, appears on the whole to have been much more common than transfer by sale. This accords with the general Gros Ventre pattern of transfer of other kinds of property. The Gros Ventre sold little; he gave much. Property changed hands within the tribe much more by donation than by barter.[16]

Gifts of power were made either to relatives or to friends, and while the giver still had his or her health, though perhaps of advanced age, and not ordinarily at least, on his death bed. A number of cases of offer to transfer by gift doctoring and love power during the possessor's lifetime have been previously given. War power, according to The Boy, "was commonly given, without payment, to a son or brother." "War medicine," according to Al Chandler, "was passed down from generation to generation; Bull Lodge gave his sons (Curly Head and Otter Robe) their war powers. Curly Head was a medicine man but Otter Robe was more of a warrior. Little Man, my adopted father, had some kind of war medicine from his brother, when his brother got killed Little Man took this medicine (a sparrow-hawk and a shirt) from him to keep it, and to use it."[17] While war power might pass down in a family, we obtained no clear instance of such transmission by inheritance proper, in the sense of transfer to take effect only upon the death of the transferrer.

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Our data, all from The Boy, on loan and delegation of power, as distinct from outright transfer, are meager. "An owner of power to be lucky in warfare so as not to be shot could lend this to somebody, and if the owner were going to die he could tell the borrower to keep it." "Sometimes, when a man with medicine power was appealed to come and doctor somebody, he could say to his wife:

[16] For details, see Flannery, 1953, pp. 80-87.

[17] Some of Bull Lodge's war medicines are illustrated in Flannery, 1953, Plate 3; cf. also p. 92.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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778 426 'Wife, I transfer this power to you. You go and doctor this time. I don't feel like doctoring today.' But before this she would have always accompanied him in his curing practice and knew exactly what to do and sing." Such a "transfer" was purely an *ad hoc* delegation, not a surrender of his power.

Power could be completely lost by the owner either during his lifetime or at death. During the owner's lifetime it could be lost by persistent disuse, by complete and final transfer through sale or gift, by "using it up," and as a result of breach of the rules. Where, for instance, a man had power to cure only a limited number of people, say four, with the conclusion of his fourth cure, the power was "used up" and so ceased. A certain Gros Ventre who had power to cause rain and storms made much use of it in a battle with the Crow but finally used it up and was killed by them.

If a person with power had not transferred it, on his deathbed the power embodied in or associated with some material object or living thing within him would come out of him, usually out of his mouth, and so his power would die with him. Even though the root or medicine he had used but had not transferred was known to others, they would not be allowed after his death to use it in curing. Thus lots of good medicines were not used, even though they were known to be efficacious.

Use of Powers

778 We now come to rites and procedures followed in the exercise of powers for war, gambling, love and various miscellaneous purposes, including legerdemain. A consideration of the use of the very important doctoring power is reserved for separate treatment in a subsequent chapter.

The great majority of those who went out in quest of power sought power to be great warriors and to become wealthy. The two aims were ordinarily closely related. A major goal of most [721 war parties was the acquisition of horses,—the chief wealth of 556] the Gros Ventres in the old days. Both success in war and possession of wealth brought prestige, and such prestige in the individualistic competitive culture of the Gros Ventre was eagerly sought after.